At the beginning of 2019, the South Australian government established eight Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) to strengthen industry’s voice in skills and workforce development, and to ensure that funding for skills and training is directly aligned to industry priorities.

Workforce Insights brings together advice from ISCs and their networks, labour market and training data and industry research to explore the latest trends in skills and workforce development. In developing these reports, the Training and Skills Commission has adopted an industry centred approach, so you can be sure the insights have been endorsed by industry leaders. The reports were developed prior to, and in the early stages of, the global outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19), and it is evident that significant disruption has since occurred – impacting both industry and the demand for a skilled workforce, as well as the ability of employers to commence and retain apprentices and trainees. The need for further consideration of the impacts relevant to each industry is noted, and work in this regard has commenced.

Workforce Insights has been developed to inform government skills planning and to support employers and individuals to make informed workforce and skill development decisions. Workforce Insights will continue to evolve and be updated as additional research is undertaken and new information becomes available.

Thank you to all those who supported the development of these industry-led, sector-driven documents. Individually and collectively your contribution to the skilling and development of South Australia’s current and future workforce has been immense.

For further information, tasc.sa.gov.au/workforce-insights
Correctional services

Correctional Services includes the managing and operating of correctional and detention centres, and rehabilitation services.

Key findings

- Although attracting new recruits can be difficult due to the perceived and actual safety risks and uncompetitive salaries, there is a low staff turnover rate.
- It is difficult to staff correctional facilities in South Australia's regional areas.
- Skills needs are changing to include more critical thinking, problem solving, emotional intelligence, victim awareness, and advanced relationship management skills.
- Technology use in correctional services provision has increased, demanding increased IT skills in all staff and in supporting roles.
Industry outlook

Australia’s total prison population increased by more than 50 per cent in the decade 2008 to 2018. The increase has had a significant impact on the infrastructure and resources of correctional facilities across all jurisdictions.¹

The corrections sector across Australia is forecast to experience 7.8 per cent employment growth in the years to 2024.²

In recent years, South Australia has needed a larger corrections workforce to build the infrastructure required to cope with the increase in population. Between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2017, 1 043 new beds were commissioned across the state’s prison system, and 308 more were added in the two years to 30 June 2019.³

Challenges and opportunities in the correctional sector in South Australia identified by the ISC include:

- competition between providers for staff within South Australia
- legislative changes that increase the rates of home detention, and the government’s commitment to recidivism, require different skills sets.

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2  |  Ibid, 10–11.
Challenges and opportunities in the correctional sector nationally include:

- professionalisation and changing skills needs, including in communication, critical thinking, problem solving, empathy, victim awareness, relationship management and self-management planning\(^4\)
- Australia’s prison population has increased by over 50% from 2008 to 2018\(^5\)
- increased demand for technology-based solutions, including cloud-based technologies, GPS, radio frequency, Internet of Things connected devices (e.g. electronic monitoring)
- different skills in handling dogs to improve the safety and security of prisons and staff
- ICT and digital literacy perceived as essential skills for the correctional services workforce
- industry-specific cybersecurity skills to combat the risk of cyber attacks
- more requirements for staff to have ‘soft’ skills, with staff needing cognitive skills and emotional intelligence to build rapport and sympathy with offenders to communicate effectively and resolve or de-escalate conflicts.\(^6\) Other critical skills include critical thinking, leadership and emotional intelligence
- the role of vocational education in reducing recidivism through providing non-technical skills to encourage and direct offenders towards appropriate training programs and enhanced skills.\(^7\)

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\(^4\) Australian Industry Standards, Corrections Industry Reference Committee Skills Forecast (2019), 14–15
\(^5\) Ibid, 15.
\(^6\) Ibid, 19.
\(^7\) Ibid, 16–17
Skill shortages

Skill shortages includes occupations or skills that have been identified by Industry Skills Councils as currently experiencing a skills shortage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Managers</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinicians</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctional Management</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctional Officers</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cybersecurity specialist</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Workers (Justice and Custodial)</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and safety</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Australian Industry Standards online survey reported that reasons for skill shortages in Australia’s corrections industry in the past 12 months included:

- wages and salaries considered too low to attract candidates
- unattractive job/poor industry image
- geographic location of the vacancy
- competition from other organisations
- ageing workforce/current staff retiring.

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8 | Australian Industry Standards, Corrections Industry Reference Committee Skills Forecast (2019), 22
Critical occupations and skills

Critical occupations includes occupations or skills that have been identified by Industry Skills Councils and include occupations that are deemed critical to achieving industry growth potential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking and problem solving</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital literacy</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy and victim awareness</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level communication skills</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship management</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Future skill shortage

Future skill shortages include occupations or skills that have been identified by ISCs as being at risk of experiencing a skills shortage over the next five years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers</td>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote operation and electronic monitoring</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Australian corrections sector, there is an increasing need for skilled correctional staff who can competently handle prison operations appropriately and professionally. Ensuring that correctional practice qualifications meet the increasing skills and knowledge demands of the industry is vital to address changing skill requirements.9

Soft skills required by the correctional services industry include:

- problem solving
- critical thinking
- adaptability
- higher-order communication skills.10

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10 | Ibid, 15–16.
Recruitment

Attracting new recruits to the corrections industry can be difficult due to perceived and real safety risks, uncompetitive salaries and staff dissatisfaction.

Retention

South Australia’s corrections industry does not have a high turnover of staff. The lack of career pathways is cited as a factor affecting the retention rate.

Skilled migration

Correctional officers are not on the list of State Nominated Occupations for skilled migration, and it is not possible to apply for an Australian visa under the General Skilled Migration Program.
Regional issues

It is difficult to staff correctional facilities in South Australia’s regional areas. The Port Augusta prison is the largest correctional facility in South Australia, and ISC members indicate there are ongoing issues with recruitment for that facility.

Plans and major projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Additional 40 beds—Adelaide Women’s Prison</td>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Privatisation of Adelaide Remand Centre</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ISC priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISC Priority</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Industry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Australian Corrections industry data collection</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifting the standard of literacy and numeracy in the regions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Government and industry</td>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

South Australian Corrections industry data collection

Identify the specific skills and workforce needs of the South Australian Corrections Sector, through the collection of South Australian specific information and data. Currently workforce data is heavily influenced by the needs and requirements of the Australian eastern states and territories.

Lifting the standard of literacy and numeracy in the regions

Examine ways to lift the standard of literacy and numeracy in the regions, thereby creating a pipeline of skilled workers to address the difficulty in recruiting staff from regional areas.
Disclaimer: The material contained in this document has been developed by the Training and Skills Commission with support and data provided by the Department for Innovation and Skills and others. The views and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of South Australia or the Department for Innovation and Skills, or indicate any commitment to a particular course of action.

The information contained in this document is provided in good faith and all reasonable care has been taken in its preparation. The Training and Skills Commission recommends users exercise care in interpreting this document and carefully evaluate the relevance of the material for their purpose and where necessary obtain appropriate advice specific to their particular circumstances.

This document can be accessed electronically at:

www.tasc.sa.gov.au